
Administrative Information

Mojave National Preserve came into existence with the signing on October 31, 1994, of the California Desert Protection Act. Under Public Law No. 103-433 the Bureau of Land Management's East Mojave National Scenic Area transferred some 1,450,000 acres of desert to the National Park Service. The Union Pacific Railroad town of Kelso is centrally located in the preserve at the intersection of Cima and Kelbaker roads. The Union Pacific Railroad constructed the depot in Kelso in 1924, replacing the previous depot that had been destroyed by fire.

Interpretive Objectives

Restoration and rehabilitation of Kelso Depot will provide Mojave National Preserve a visitor center with exhibits and audiovisual programs while also allowing the park to better interpret the cultural resources of Kelso and the depot itself. The early period (1924-42) has been selected for interpretive focus in order to display the depot in its original configuration. By using historic furnishings in select depot rooms, the park aims to deepen the public's understanding of how the depot functioned historically as well as retaining, to the extent possible, an accurate historic feeling. Fully furnished bedrooms and a telegraph office will help emphasize the nature of activities and use the depot saw in its early days of operation.

Operating Plan

The fully historically furnished rooms in Kelso Depot are at opposite ends of the building and on different floors. Visitors will view these furnished rooms while going through the traditional museum exhibits that address the park's interpretive themes, so to some degree the historically furnished spaces will be vignettes amid other interpretive media. All tours will be self-guided. The park may elect to include something of an "indoor wayside" at the entrance to the historically furnished rooms so as to clarify for visitors the nature of the scenes they see and to help generate thought about Kelso depot in this earlier era.

Prior Planning Documents

The following planning document affects the use and management of the Kelso Depot, Kelso, California:

An Oasis for Railroaders in the Mojave: The History and Architecture of the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad Depot, Restaurant and Employees' Hotel at Kelso, California, on the Union Pacific System, Gordon Chappell, Robert L. Carper, et al., 1998. (Kelso Depot Historic Structure Report)

"Kelso Depot Paint Analysis Report," Architectural Resources Group, March 1, 2001.

